

4. Labor Law

No important laws were enacted, amended or abolished in 1983, although there were some notable amendments to the Labor Health and Safety Ordinance, especially Title 2 (Safety Standards), Chapter 1 (Prevention of Dangers in Use of Machinery), Section 8 (High-Speed Rotators). Under Article 27 (1) of the Labor Health and Safety Act, the Ordinance establishes measures to be taken by entrepreneurs to reduce dangers and health problems. In order to keep pace with the introduction of industrial robots in recent years, some types of work are now designated to be "dangerous or harmful work" (Article 36 of the Ordinance), and the former Section 8 (former Articles 149–151, High-Speed Rotators) has been divided into two sections: Section 8 (Articles 149–150.2, High-Speed Rotators) and Section 9 (Articles 150.3–151, Industrial Robots).

Labor Health and Safety (Amendment) Ordinance

Labor Ministry Ordinance No. 18. Promulgated on June 20, 1983. Went into force (except some provisions) on July 1, 1983.

[Points of Amendment]

- (1) The definition of industrial robot:
"machinery with (a) manipulator(s) and a memory system, which, according to the data introduced for use with the machinery system, automatically expands, contracts, bends, stretches, moves vertically or horizontally or turns the manipulator, or compounds these actions" (Article 36).
- (2) The following types of work are designated to be "dangerous or harmful work":
 - ① instruction or verification of the order and location of motions of the manipulator of an industrial robot within the motional area of the robot (hereinafter "instruction etc."), and work related thereto (Article 36 (xxxi));

- ② inspection, repair, regulation or verification of an industrial robot within the motional area of the robot (hereinafter “inspection etc.”), and work related thereto (Article 35 (xxxii)).
- (3) Establishment of concrete safety measures required of entrepreneurs:
 - ① as to the “instruction etc.” (Article 150.3);
 - (a) establishment and observance of rules on steps and procedure of operations, speed of work, signs used at the time when more than one worker is on duty, measures taken at the time of an accident, measures taken at the time of resuming operations, measures taken for the prevention of faulty operations, and so on;
 - (b) measures permitting workers who are performing the work or supervisors to stop the operation of the robot at the time of an accident;
 - (c) measures preventing operations by anyone except the workers performing given work, at the time of “instruction etc.”;
 - ② at the time when the robot is running (Article 150.4);
measures necessary to prevent danger, such as installation of railings or fences by way of precautions against possible collision;
 - ③ as to the “inspection etc.” (Article 150.5);
except when the measures nearly the same as those provided as to “instruction etc.” in Article 150.3 (noted above) are taken, measures preventing operations by anyone except the workers performing the work, at the time of “inspection etc.”, such as stopping the operation, locking an operations switch, giving notice that the robot is being inspected, and so on;
 - ④ during examination (Article 151);
examination of the following matters before the “instruction etc.” and, if any problems are discovered in the examination, necessary measures such as repair;
 - (1) the covering of electric wires;

- (2) the operation of the manipulator;
- (3) the function of the brake and the emergency stopper.

[Comment]

The spread of industrial robots has increased the number of accidents, killing or injuring workers, due to disorder, faulty operations or defects in machinery. Measures designed to meet this situation were adopted belatedly. For the purpose of securing the safety of workers, it is desirable, in case of "instruction" or "examination", to oblige entrepreneurs to interrupt the course of normal operations except for a trial run, and to apply these provisions to the industrial robots still under study.

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5. International Law

— Treaties and Agreements —

Multilateral:

Agreement Establishing the African Development Bank, signed on Feb. 3, 1983, entered into force for Japan on Feb. 3, 1983.

Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, acceded to on June 9, 1983, entered into force for Japan on Oct. 2, 1983.

Convention Concerning Minimum Standards in Merchant Ships, ratified on May 31, 1983, entered into force for Japan on May 31, 1984.

Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer